



FEMA



Summary: Appendix K: Format and Standards for Flood Insurance Rate Maps

Audience

The primary intended audience for this guidance is FEMA Regions and mapping partners, including Production and Technical Services Contractors (PTS), the Customer and Data Support Contractor (CDS), Cooperating Technical Partners (CTPs), and Other Federal Agencies (OFAs) contracted to produce FIRM panels.

Purpose

Appendix K sets forth standards for the graphic elements that are shown on each Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), including the mapping format representation, presentation of base map information, map frame sizing, legend, title block, and presentation of flood hazard information. The Appendix outlines the standards for all Preliminary and Final FIRM deliverables.

Appendix K has been revised to align regulatory product requirements with FEMA's digital vision and to allow for clearer color maps focused on floodplains produced at a lower cost and level of effort. This Appendix in conjunction with *Appendix L: Guidance for Preparing Digital Data and FIRM Databases* provide the standards and guidance necessary that enable map creation with little or no manual cartographic finishing.

The updated Appendix K strengthens the link between the FIRM Database and FIRM panels that will allow for a more automated and streamlined map production process to be implemented in the future. The new maps have less information that is not directly related to NFIP business. The addition of colors and other improvements to the symbology will help communicate flood risk more efficiently. In addition, the implementation of this Appendix will reduce the costs associated with the production of FIRM panels in the future mainly because of simplified mapping standards.

FEMA Regions must implement this Appendix (i.e. begin using the updated map format) for all newly contracted studies contracted in FY2012 and later. It is also highly recommended that the updated map layout be used for studies contracted in FY2011. The decision to apply this Appendix to studies contracted in FY2011 is at FEMA Regional Project Officer discretion.

Risk MAP Guidance

This document is a component of Risk MAP Guidance. The Risk MAP program is managed by FEMA to develop flood risk information and work with communities to help them understand and act on the data to manage the risks. Risk MAP Guidance defines the product and process standards and best practices for the program:

- Standards are contained in the document "Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping" (G&S document) which primarily contain standards, but currently substantial best practice information are also included.
- Procedure Memos supersede portions of the G&S document or address new issues not currently covered. In most cases they will be integrated into the G&S document over time.
- Operating Guidance describes best practices that support the Risk MAP standards.

RiskMAP
Increasing Resilience Together

Through implementation of this Appendix, it is expected that maps will be produced more consistently across the nation and will be more easily readable by community officials, floodplain administrators, and other end users. It is also anticipated that the change in organization and layout of the map will allow for it to be more easily prepared by mapping partners, which will result in cost savings over the life of the program, especially as mapping partners begin implementing automated tools and procedures to develop FIRM panels.